PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS IN MARCH 2011

White Castle # 16

43 E. CERMAK RD.

BUILT: 1930

ARCHITECT: LEWIS E. RUSSELL (WITH LLOYD W. RAY, CONSTRUCTION SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE WHITE CASTLE SYSTEM OF EATING HOUSES, INC.)

Located at the corner of E. Cermak Rd. and S. Wabash Ave. between the McCormick Place convention center and Chinatown, White Castle # 16 remains the best-surviving example in Chicago of the buildings built by the White Castle System of Eating Houses, Inc. White Castle was founded in Wichita, Kansas, in 1921, and its chain of popular hamburger stands soon spread to over a dozen cities, including Chicago, by 1930; the company is considered the "father" of the many fast-food chains that transformed American eating habits and streetscapes in the twentieth century.

White Castle was the first restaurant chain to popularize hamburgers. Formerly a disreputable "carnival" food in the early twentieth century, hamburgers became the defacto "American" sandwich in the 1920s, largely due to White Castle, and remain so today. White Castle is significant for its pioneering and much-copied use, among restaurant chains, of distinctive-looking programmatic architecture; a visually-reinforced cleanliness in operations through its use of white-glazed brick (and later porcelein-enamel-clad steel panel) exteriors and stainless steel interiors with open kitchens; a standardized menu and service featuring tasty "take-out" food that was high-quality while still inexpensive; and extensive newspaper advertising and outreach to middle-class families. White Castle # 16's white-glazed brick exterior, with its crenellated forms and detailing, inspired by Chicago's Water Tower, exemplify the company's pioneering use of standardized and visually-distinctive architecture as "bricks-and-mortar" advertising.

American Restaurants prior to 1920

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Americans most often dined at home or in the homes of relatives and friends. Restaurants were relatively few in number, with taverns and boardinghouses, both of which served meals to residents and outside visitors, comprising the majority of eating establishments. Chains of "eating houses," to use a late 19th-century term for restaurants and other eating establishments such as lunchrooms, were unknown.

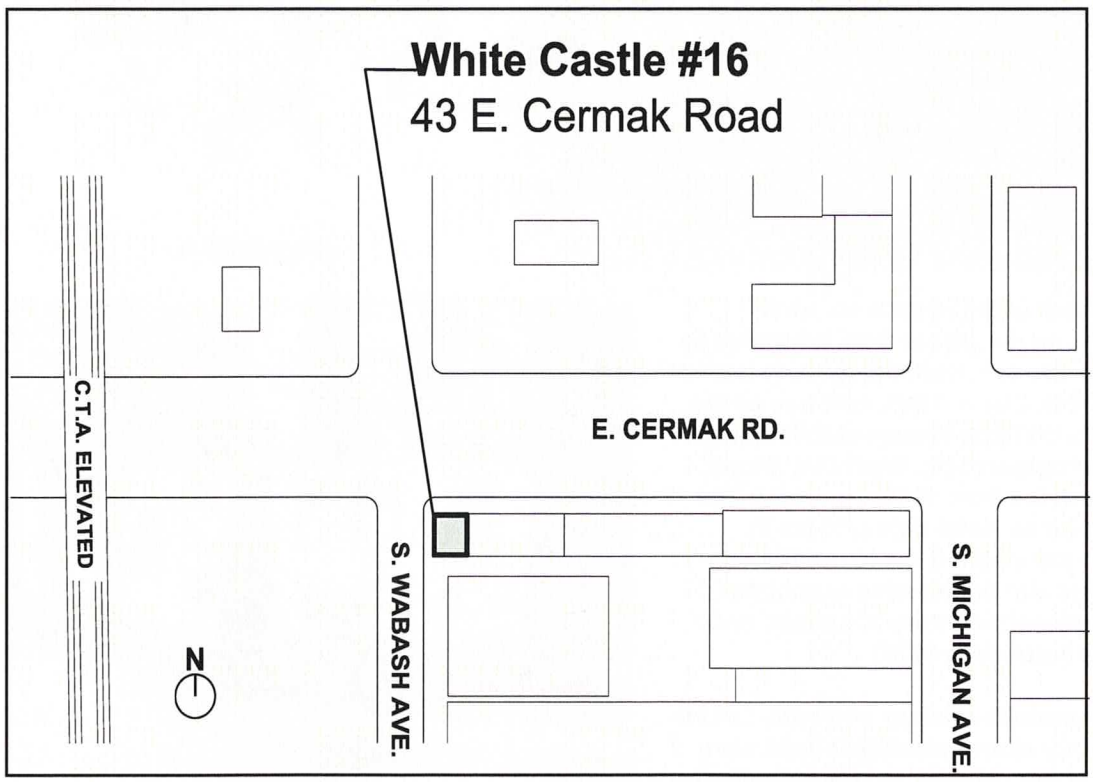
By the mid-nineteenth century, as American wealth increased and urbanization began to quicken, elite restaurants were established in large cities. The most notable of these was Delmonico's, which opened in New York in 1845 and soon became the standard by which American restaurants were compared. Also upholding standards of fine public dining during the latter years of the century were dining rooms in high-quality hotels such as the Parker House in Boston, the Palmer House in Chicago and the St. Francis in San Francisco. Such establishments typically served leisurely multiple-course meals consisting of finely-cooked dishes, paired with wines and other spirits and served by attentive wait staff. They were housed in beautifully-decorated and –furnished dining rooms that took visible cues either from the architectural style of the hotel within which they were located or from fashionable architectural and decorative styles.

Most mid- and late-19th-century Americans, though, ate in much more modest public establishments, if they ate in public at all. The most common types of 19th-century eating establishments were working-class urban "eating houses" that provided basic cuisine, quickly served and consumed. Increasingly, as more individuals worked in factories and offices, and the pace of urban life grew faster, more meals, especially those at noontime, were eaten at these quick-service restaurants that became an important component of urban streetscapes in the last decades of the 19th century.

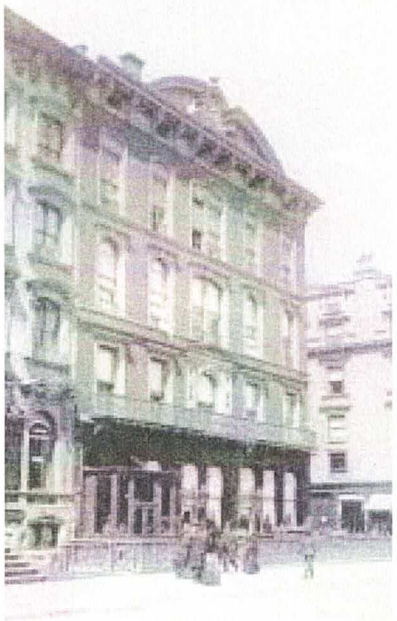
There were a variety of types of eating houses commonly found in cities; they included lunch wagons, diners, luncheonettes, coffee shops, soda fountains, lunchrooms, and cafeterias. Physical design and layouts, menus and levels of service varied, but the common denominator was a democratic availability and ease of use, simply-prepared food, quick service and inexpensive cost.

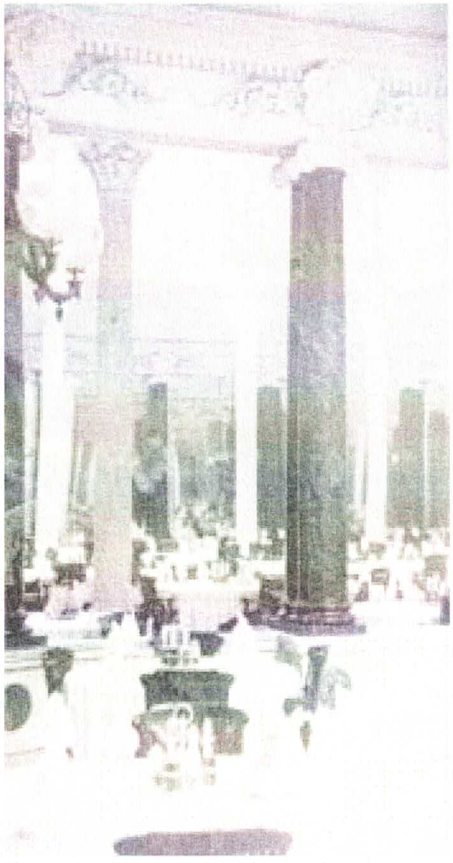
Lunch wagons originally were horse-drawn covered wagons that typically parked outside of large factory complexes. Dispensing a quick and simple menu of sandwiches, coffee, milk, and pie, lunch wagons provided an inexpensive alternative to the proverbial lunch pail. Over time, these lunch wagons became stationary, larger and more elaborate in appearance. Diners, popularized in the 1920s and 1930s and housed in visually-distinctive, stationary trolley and train cars, are descendents of these transient nineteenth-century establishments.

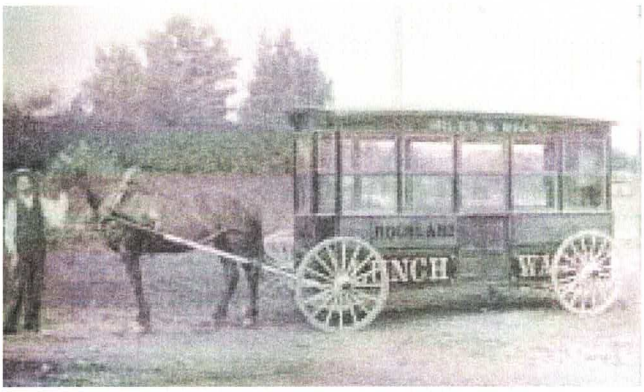
Most quick-service eating houses were more fixed in space from the start. A step up from lunch wagons were luncheonettes and lunchrooms, found not in tiny free-standing structures but located in storefront spaces in commercial and mixed-use buildings. These simple restaurants were simply decorated with plaster walls and wood (or increasingly tile) floors and served simple menus of quickly-served sandwiches, entrees, beverages and desserts.



Top: White Castle #16 is a small, one-story building constructed of white-glazed brick with green and beige brick trim. It was built in 1930 as the sixteenth Chicago branch of the popular White Castle hamburger chain. Bottom: The building is located on the southeast corner of E. Cermak Rd. and S. Wabash Ave.







Restaurants in nineteenth-century America ran the gamut from luxurious to spartan. Top left: Delmonicos's, founded in New York City in 1845, was one of the country's first fine-dining establishments. This photograph of its West 26th Street location dates from 1876. Top right: The Palmer House Hotel dining room in Chicago exemplified the luxurious surroundings and fine service associated with nineteenth-century American hotel dining (photo, circa 1875).

Most nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century eating establishments were more modest. Middle: A late nineteenth-century lunch wagon (location and date unknown). Right: The Palace Night lunch stand, located in Connecticut (town unknown; photo 1906).

Cafeterias were similar in scale to the larger lunchrooms, but eschewed sit-down service in favor of a continuously-moving line of patrons passing in front of hot- and cold-food serving tables with food already on display, from which selections could be made, then paid for at a cashier station at the end of the line. A variation on cafeterias were automats, where one wall was dominated with a multitude of small glass doors, behind which individual portions of food were placed by serving staff. Upon seeing food that was desired, a customer deposited money in a slot in the door, which opened and provided access to the food.

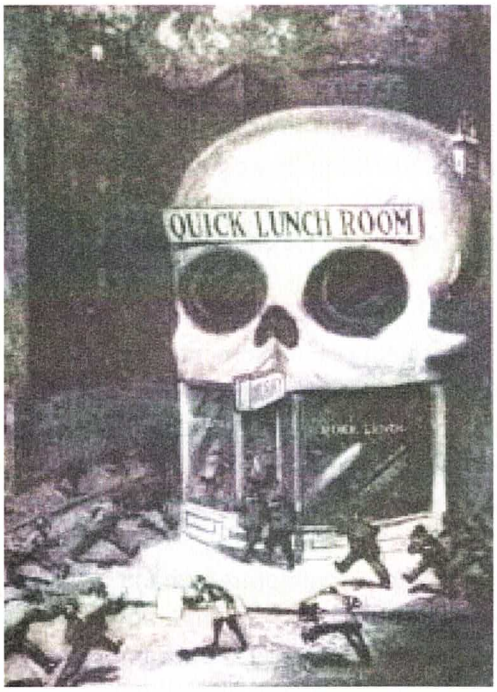
A variant on lunchrooms were lunch counters within "five-and-dime" stores, such as the F. W. Woolworth chain, where a long counter with stools was watched over by a combination cook/ server. Similar in configuration were soda fountains, often found in drug stores, which built their clientele around the sale of beverages and confectionaries, especially ice cream treats, but which also often served sandwiches.

In general, these late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century eating establishments were individually owned. Typically occupying only a portion of a larger building or storefront, their visual presence on urban streetscapes was limited to signage. Even early lunch wagons and diners, although freestanding, were visually unimpressive in the pre-World War I era, with the still familar streetcars long associated with diner architecture coming later in the century.

Where urban restaurant chains existed, such as the John Thompson cafeterias found in Chicago in the early twentieth century, they typically were located in conventional buildings, not ones specifically designed as "bricks-and-mortar" advertisements in the way that later chain restaurants such as White Castle were. In addition, these chains were local or regional in nature, with outlets limited to a particular city or region of the country.

The first large restaurant chain with a national reach and reputation, providing standardized food and service within often visually-distinctive surroundings, was the Fred Harvey Company, founded in 1876 by Fred Harvey, a long-time railroad agent with early experience in restaurant work. Harvey realized through his extensive travels that railroad passengers, in the days before railroad diner cars, were left to the mercy of erratic and mediocre food served by a hodgepodge of lunch stands and lunchrooms located in or near rail depots. He realized that a chain of trackside restaurants with consistent, high levels of food and service could be profitable.

"Harvey Houses," as these restaurants came to be known, were built throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and eventually numbered in the hundreds. They were located along major passenger train routes in the western United States, especially the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Although some were located in unprepossessing buildings, many Harvey Houses were located in railroad stations or nearby hotels. Service was quick, since train stops were usually limited in time, but the food became well-known for its high quality and meticulous preparation, and the restaurants themselves became known for high standards of cleanliness and service. Well-trained waitresses and kitchen staff were trained by Harvey and his staff in standardized food preparation and serving techniques that allowed great numbers of passengers to be served quickly.



Above: A 1907 cartoon satirizes the perceived low quality of quick-service restaurants in the early twentieth century. Top right: A interior view of the Waldorf Lunch restaurant in Springfield, Massachusetts, soon after its opening in 1904. It was long and narrow in plan, furnished with wooden chairs with desk-like arms. Middle right: A later Waldorf Lunch restaurant in Buffalo, New York, 1919. Much brighter and lighter than the 1904 restaurant, it had light-colored walls, free-standing tables and stools, and a light-and-dark patterned tile floor. The Waldorf Lunch chain grew to 75 outlets in New England and New York State cities by 1920. Bottom right: A view behind the scenes at an automat in Boston, 1919.

Harvey Houses were located in a variety of buildings, both large and small. They are especially noted, however, for their locations in New Mexico, where the company used an exotic architectural style incorporating both Native American and Spanish Colonial visual motifs. Other Harvey Houses used historical styles such as Tudor Revival, Classical Revival and Flemish Revival to provide an air of refinement for what was essentially railroad "fast food." Through the use of visually-distinctive architecture, the Fred Harvey Company is regarded as the first restaurant chain to use architecture as a marketing tool. (The largest Harvey House was located in Chicago's Union Station.)

In general, however, American restaurants before World War I did not operate on the large scale that allowed for standardization of operations, nor did they advertise widely. However, industries such as the automobile industry, especially the Ford Motor Company under Henry Ford, were increasingly using consistent and standardized operating procedures to cut cost, increase efficiency and improve quality, making their products accessible to the burgeoning middle class. In addition, newspaper advertising was increasingly used to reach potential buyers for many consumer products. White Castle brought these modern industrial methods—large scale, standardized buildings and operations, media advertising, and the use of programmatic architecture as a marketing tool—to the sale of hamburgers in the 1920s.

The Founding and Early Years of the White Castle System of Eating Houses, Inc.

The White Castle hamburger chain was founded in May 1921 in Wichita, Kansas, by J. Walter "Walt" Anderson, a hamburger-stand proprietor, and Edgar Waldo "Billy" Ingram, a real-estate and insurance agent. Together they made the "White Castle System of Eating Houses, Inc." the first fast-food chain in America.

Born into a farming family in St. Mary's, Kansas, Walt Anderson was a restless man and self-described "ne'er-do-well" who roamed the Midwest in the years after leaving college, working in a variety of restaurants. While working as a short-order cook in a lunchroom in Wichita, Anderson experimented with different ways to cook hamburger.

Up to that time, ground beef had an unsavory reputation. Sensational books such as Sinclair Lewis's *The Jungle*, which exposed the unsanitary conditions found at Chicago meat-packing companies, had left many Americans squemish about meat that they hadn't ground themselves. Hamburger was too commonly ground from poor-quality remnants of beef carcases and from meat on the verge of spoilage, then treated with preservatives.

Another strike against hamburger was the way it was prepared in the quick-service lunchrooms and lunch stands that served it. At the beginning of the 1920s, hamburger typically was served more like a meatball sandwich. The meat was molded into a ball and placed on a griddle, where it cooked slowly until it was a dry, grayish, relatively tasteless lump, then put between

two slices of cold bread. As a result, in addition to being made from questionable beef, the typical hamburger sandwich was considered unappetizing, and suitable only for sale at fairgrounds, circuses, carnivals and the most common of working-class lunch stands and eating houses.

Anderson, through his experimentation with various cooking methods, found that thin hamburger patties, seared quickly over high heat, were much more tasty and juicy than hamburgers prepared in the then-traditional manner. Adding chopped onions to the patties as they grilled also further enhanced their flavor, as did serving them on warmed buns rather than cold bread slices.

The young grill cook saw entrepreneuial possibilities with this new means of preparing hamburger. He opened his own hamburger stand in 1916 in Wichita using a borrowed $80 to buy and refurbish an old shoe-repair stand. The resulting hamburger stand was by all accounts visually simple and unremarkable, with a sign advertising "Hamburgers 5¢" hanging over the door. Inside it was equipped with a counter and three stools, a flat piece of scavenged iron that Anderson used as a griddle, and various cooking utensils.

Despite cash-flow problems at the beginnning, Anderson's hamburger stand was an immediate success with customers, who appreciated both the tastiness of his quick-grilled hamburger patties and the effort that he made to reassure them that his gound beef was fresh, clean and free of questionable "additives." Anderson ground and grilled his ground beef directly behind the counter in full view of his customers. Impressed by the cleanliness of his shop and the high quality and good taste of his hamburgers, customers soon became "regulars," buying sandwiches every day, and his business boomed. Within two years, Anderson opened two more hamburger stands, and, by 1920, a fourth stand, all in working-class Wichita neighborhoods.

Anderson did what he could to maximize business during these years with various business practices and marketing techniques that became an established part of the later White Castle business model. First of all, cleanliness and high food quality were key. Customers had to be assured that they were not risking their own health or the health of their families eating Anderson's hamburgers. He also worked to improve quality and consistency of his food supplies by contracting from reputable local supply companies and noting this in on-site advertising and flyers.

High volume was also important. Although they each had counters with a few stools, Anderson's hamburger stands were not primarily sit-down establishments. Instead, customers were encouraged to buy and eat on the go. Anderson made the purchase of multiple hamburgers at one visit part of his on-site advertising, with signs urging the purchase of his sandwiches in "half-dozen lots" with the slogan, "Buy 'em by the Sack."

With the understanding that some customers were put off by his hamburger stands' shabby appearance, he also worked to improve their looks, remembering later that "I cleaned up my place, making it neat and attractive." All of these principles cleanliness, consistency of product,

encouraging the purchase of multiple hamburger sandwiches at one time, and creating an attractive, visually-distinctive presence would become basic business principles for Anderson and partner Billy Ingram when they would later found White Castle in 1921.

By 1920 Walt Anderson had achieved enough financial success that he was able to buy a visually-imposing house in one of Wichita's better residential neighborhoods. But he was still a hamburger-stand proprietor. It remained difficult for him to get bank loans for business expansion due to the distrust that bankers had about the financial respectability and long-term viability of hamburger stands and other such quick-service food stands. In addition, it was difficult for Anderson to rent space for additional stands due to concerns that landlords and existing tenants had about being associated with "low-class" ventures such as the sale of hamburgers.

Founding of White Castle

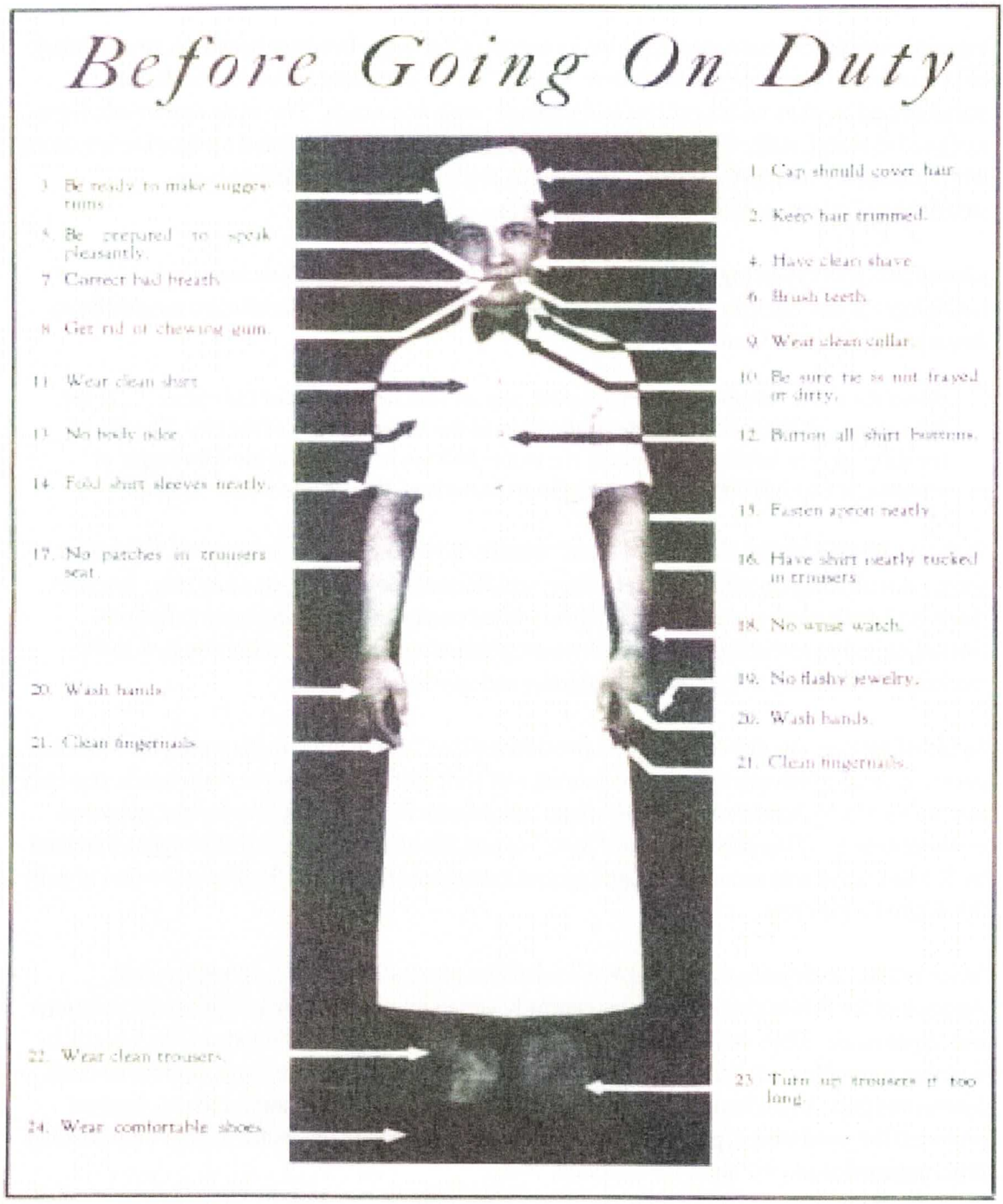
In early 1921, Anderson was initially turned away from a rental property for a potential new hamburger stand by its owner, a dentist who questioned the financial viability of a hamburger stand in that location and demanded additional financial guarantees. Negotiating the deal for Anderson was his insurance and real-estate broker, Edgar Waldo "Billy" Ingram, who agreed to cosign the lease on the dentist's property, having become personally enthusiastic about the potential of Anderson's business. With a $700 investment, Ingram became Anderson's principal investor; soon after he became his business partner and the driving force behind the resulting White Castle chain.

Billy Ingram was born in Leadville, Colorado, in 1880, but his father moved the family frequently throughout the Midwest during the boy's childhood. Ingram worked as a journalist in Omaha, Nebraska, after graduating from high school. In 1905 he became a traveling agent for the financial-services firm of R.G. Dun and Co. (later Dun and Bradstreet); two years later, he transferred to R.G. Dun's Wichita office. Soon thereafter Ingram left Dun and opened his own insurance agency in Wichita. By 1921, when he joined forces with Anderson, Ingram was the managing partner in the insurance and real-estate firm of Stone and Ingram and was a respected Wichita businessman.

What Ingram brought to Anderson's hamburger-stand business was a sound understanding of the financial world, a keen sense of the virtues of modern advertising and marketing, and a vision for growth and expansion, and Ingram repackaged Anderson's existing business. He first legally organized the partnership under a new name, the "White Castle System of Eating Houses, Inc." Ingram later explained that the new name's rationale was to convey a more positive, modern image, with "White" signifying purity and "Castle" signifying strength, stability, and permanence, all qualities not traditionally associated with hamburger stands.

He also wanted this new image to be exemplified by the company's hamburger stands themselves. Rather than merely opening additional nondescript-looking stands, Ingram wanted the locations to be in visually-unique structures that would represent the new company's ideals and help change the public perception of the hamburger business. His choice was a white-washed structure with crenellated concrete-block walls and turrets that, many years later, he

Top left: This concrete-block building, located in Wichita, Kansas, and built in 1921, was the first structure built by the White Castle System of Eating Houses, Inc. With its white-painted exterior, crenellation and corner tower, it established the architectural "look" for the White Castle chain. Top right: White Castle's marketing from the beginning encouraged customers to buy sacks of hamburgers as "take-out" food. Bottom: The interior of one of the White Castle stands from the early 1920s, with its counter, small number of stools, and food-preparation area in plain sight of customers.


Before Going On Duty
1. Cap should cover hair.
2. Keep hair trimmed.
3. Be ready to make suggestions.
4. Have clean shave.
5. Be prepared to speak pleasantly.
6. Brush teeth.
7. Correct bad breath.
8. Get rid of chewing gum.
9. Wear clean collar.
10. Be sure tie is not frayed or dirty.
11. Wear clean shirt.
12. Button all shirt buttons.
13. No body odor.
14. Fold shirt sleeves neatly.
15. Fasten apron neatly.
16. Have shirt neatly tucked in trousers.
17. No patches in trousers seat.
18. No wrist watch.
19. No flashy jewelry.
20. Wash hands.
20. Wash hands.
21. Clean fingernails.
21. Clean fingernails.
22. Wear clean trousers.
23. Turn up trousers if too long.
24. Wear comfortable shoes.

An employee appearance checklist from 1931. White Castle employees were expected to maintain a clean and neat appearance, and standard attire—white shirt, dark pants, white apron and white hat—was required.

stated had been loosely modeled on Chicago's Water Tower. Ingram believed that this visually-unusual medieval motif would reinforce the symbolism of the new company name.

Ingram's insistence on standardizing every aspect of the larger business became a key hallmark of White Castle's operations. Each new "Castle," as the company called its stands, had standardized layouts, with a grill behind a counter with five stools. Two male employees were assigned to each Castle. "White Castle Hamburgers 5 cents" was painted on the exterior, along with Anderson's successful slogan, "Buy'em by the Sack." Menu offerings were simple†hamburgers, coffee, Coca-Cola, and pie.

Cleanliness was key to Ingram's vision for White Castle. The public's existing perception of hamburger as an "unclean" food was a wide-spread perception that he worked constantly to disuade. Ingram noted that:

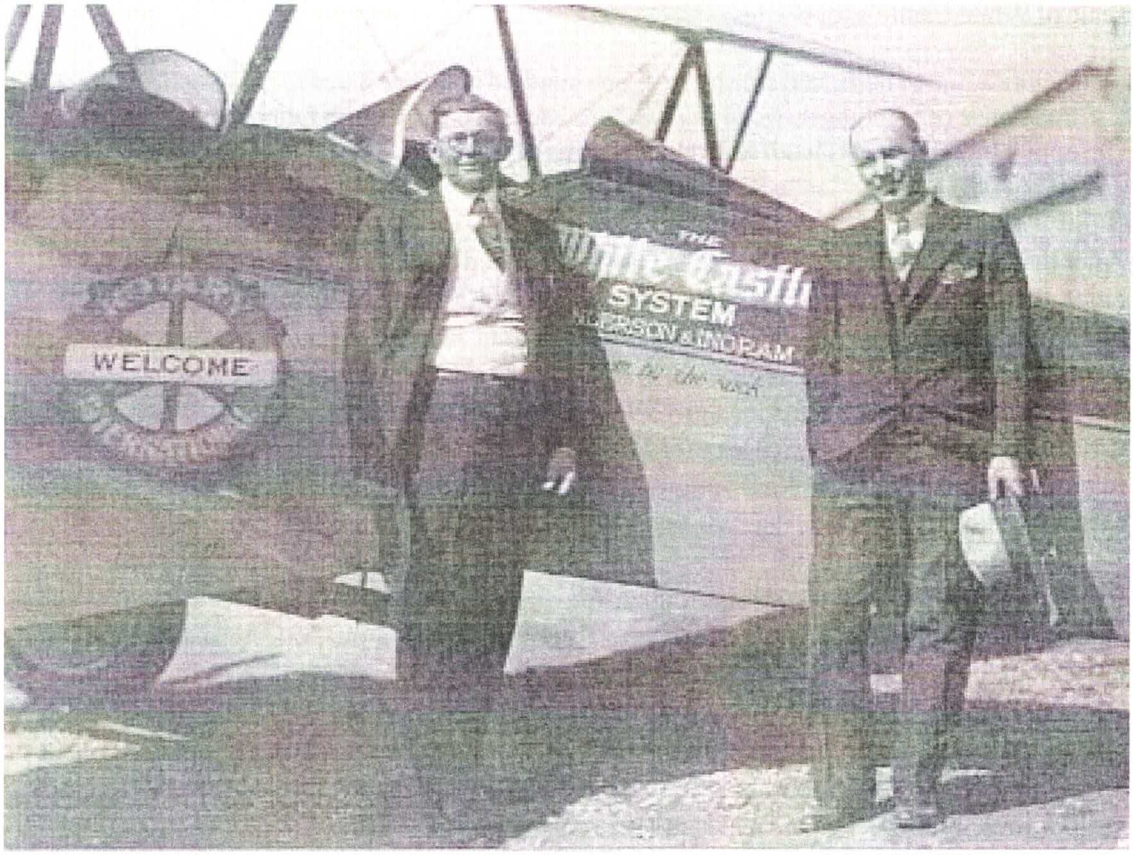
> When the word "hamburger is mentioned, one immediately thinks of the circus . . . or [a] dirty, dingy, ill-lighted hole-in-the-wall, down in the lower districts of the city. The day of the dirty, greasy hamburger is past. No more shall we have to taste the hamburger at circuses or carnivals only, for a new system has arisen, the "White Castle System."

Standard White Castle policy called for all utensils "to be kept scupulously clean." Interiors were also to be kept in pristine order. Here, architectural design played a key role. Interiors floors and walls were covered in white tiles, while counter and food-preparation fixtures (including grilles and refrigerators) were constructed of stainless steel, relatively new to the marketplace and easy to keep brightly shining and spotless-appearing.

Speed of service was also key. Ingram proclaimed that "a revelation in the eating business has come. Instead of having to go to a restaurant and wait half an hour for the noon lunch, one may step into a nearby hamburger establishment and partake in a hot, juicy hamburger, prepared instantaneously." This concept of "fast food," especially at lunch time, and although not created by White Castle, was standardized and spread throughout the United States for the first time by the White Castle chain.

Strict White Castle policy required that workers be upstanding, clean, and respectable. Applicants for White Castle jobs were carefully vetted for good family backgrounds, character and appearance. They were required to keep their fingernails well-clipped, and no jewelry or watches were allowed. Strict dress-codes required dark slacks, white shirts, and white cloth aprons and hats. In exchange for such high standards (unusual in restaurant work), Ingram provided for good wages, profit sharing, and catastrophic health insurance to help with hospital bills, unheard of in 1920s-era food service.

Ingram worked diligently to publicize White Castle. He believed that the White Castle approach to eating was revolutionary and that the company had performed an important public service by legitimizing the hamburger as a quick, inexpensive, tasty food fit for all income classes, not just the working class. Many in Wichita agreed. Within the first year, White Castle stands had saturated the city, with eight in downtown Wichita alone.



Top: A truck delivering hamburger buns to an unidentifed White Castle in the 1920s. Co-founder Billy Ingram controlled both the quality and cost of buns used by White Castle by initially buying in bulk from reputable bakeries; then later establishing bakeries owned by White Castle. Bottom: Ingram and co-founder Walt Anderson in front of the White Castle company plane. A licensed pilot, Anderson flew the pair on site inspections in the far-flung cities served by White Castle.

Ingram and Anderson soon decided to expand White Castle beyond Wichita. The first new city to receive White Castles was another Kansas city, El Dorado, 80 miles to the northeast. This expansion proved to not be a success for the company, which soon sold its stands in El Dorado to local entrepreneurs.

Ingram then decided to expand to Omaha, his former home town. The first White Castle there opened in 1923; by the end of the next year, White Castle had nine locations in the Nebraska city. Happy with the results of the expansion into Omaha, Ingram decided that the White Castle business model was readily replicatable in other American cities with large working-class populations.

White Castle now expanded at a rapid pace. First was an expansion directly east into Kansas City, where seven White Castles were built and opened by the end of 1924, and St. Louis, which received its first White Castle in 1925. St. Louis soon became the company's biggest market with eighteen hamburger stands.

This expansion to other cities proved very successful. At the end of 1925, Ingram described the scale of White Castle's food sales:

> Picture a line of buns, laid side by side, one hundred and sixty-three miles long, forty-one truckloads of hamburger, weighing two tons each, two carloads of onions, three carloads of pickles, ninety-six-hundred five gallon urns of coffee and you have an idea of the output of the White Castle System for the year 1925.

After that, throughout the 1920s, White Castle expanded at first into additional Midwestern cities, then into cities in the East. The company opened 20 restaurants in Minneapolis-St. Paul by the end of 1926. By the end of 1927, six restaurants had been opened in Louisville, Kentucky, ten in Cincinnati, and eleven in Indianapolis. In 1929, five White Castles opened in Columbus, Ohio, and nine in Chicago. The next year, despite the stock market crash, White Castle expanded into Detroit (9 locations) and the New York City metropolitan area, with twelve in New York and its New Jersey suburbs. At this time, Ingram stopped the company's expansion, noting with pride that White Castle was a "national institution."

During these early years of corporate expansion, Ingram put in place company policies to assist Anderson and himself to keep strict managerial control over their far-flung business empire from the company's corporate headquarters in Wichita. First of all, Ingram believed that it was important for Anderson and him to know the many different employees running White Castles in all of these distant cities. Just as important, it was necessary for the company's employees to know what the Wichita corporate office expected of them. They accomplished this through standardized training, regular site visits, and a corporate newsletter.

Ingram decided that each city into which White Castle expanded would have a district manager that directly oversaw all of the "Castles" in that city. These managers were under the direct supervision of Ingram, and they received standardized training in Wichita before being sent to their respective cities. Follow-up training and conferences with Ingram and others in the corporate office became common practice

Site visits by Ingram and Anderson were also common. Anderson, increasingly enamoured of flying, had trained as a pilot in the early 1920s. Starting in 1927, he helped Ingram keep track of White Castle business in other cities by flying them regularly to site visits using the White Castle company's own plane, a Curtis OX-5 Travel Air biplane with the name "White Castle System" painted on the fuselage and under one wing. Their often unannounced visits to distant White Castles kept company management and employees nervously wondering when they would be next in line for a visit, reinforcing strict adherance to company standards.

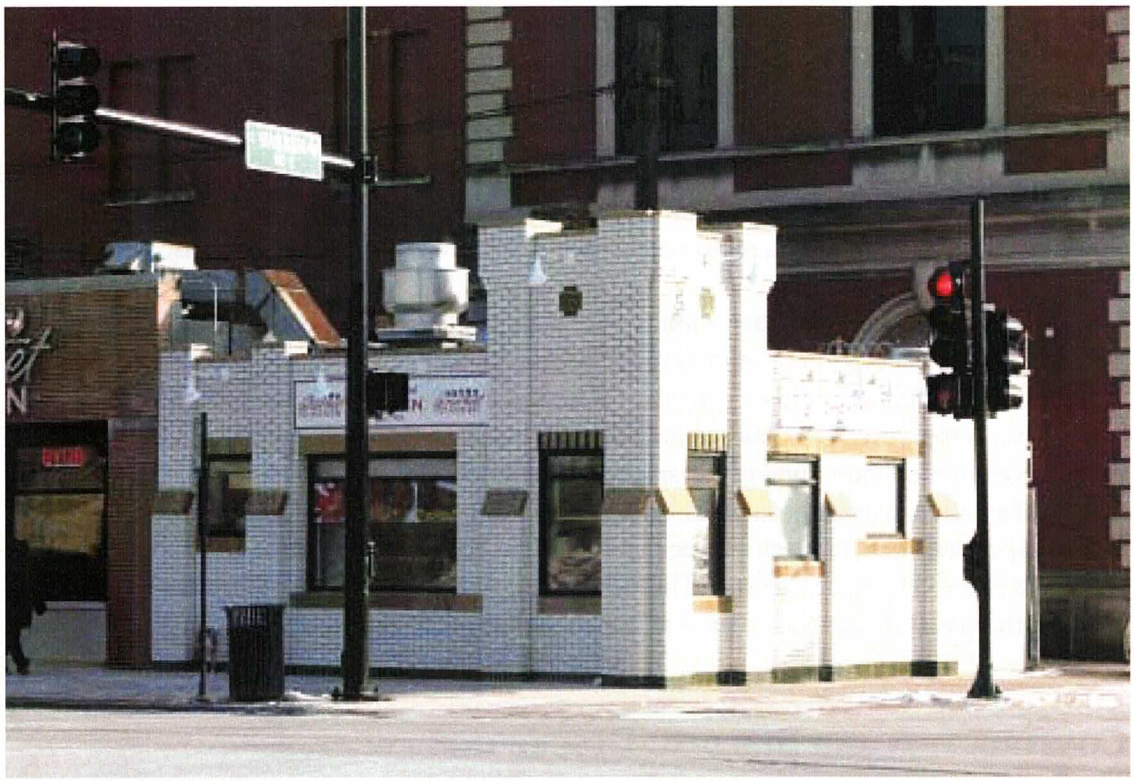
In addition, a company newsletter, somewhatly blandly named *The House Organ*, also provided a sense of corporate community for the rapidly-growing company. Published monthly, the newsletter contained regular "pep talks" from Ingram, detailed reports from each city, and letters from employees. The newsletter also ran frequent stories on Anderson and Ingram's flying adventures on the company newsplane, documenting the sometimes seat-of-the-pants aspects of aviation in its early days. The newsletter regularly commemorated employee anniversaries, major events in employee families (including the birth of children), and interesting anecdotes about "life in the Castles." This newsletter helped dissiminate the "White Castle way" to its far-flung employees and create a corporate culture and "esprit-de-corps."

Construction and Building Description

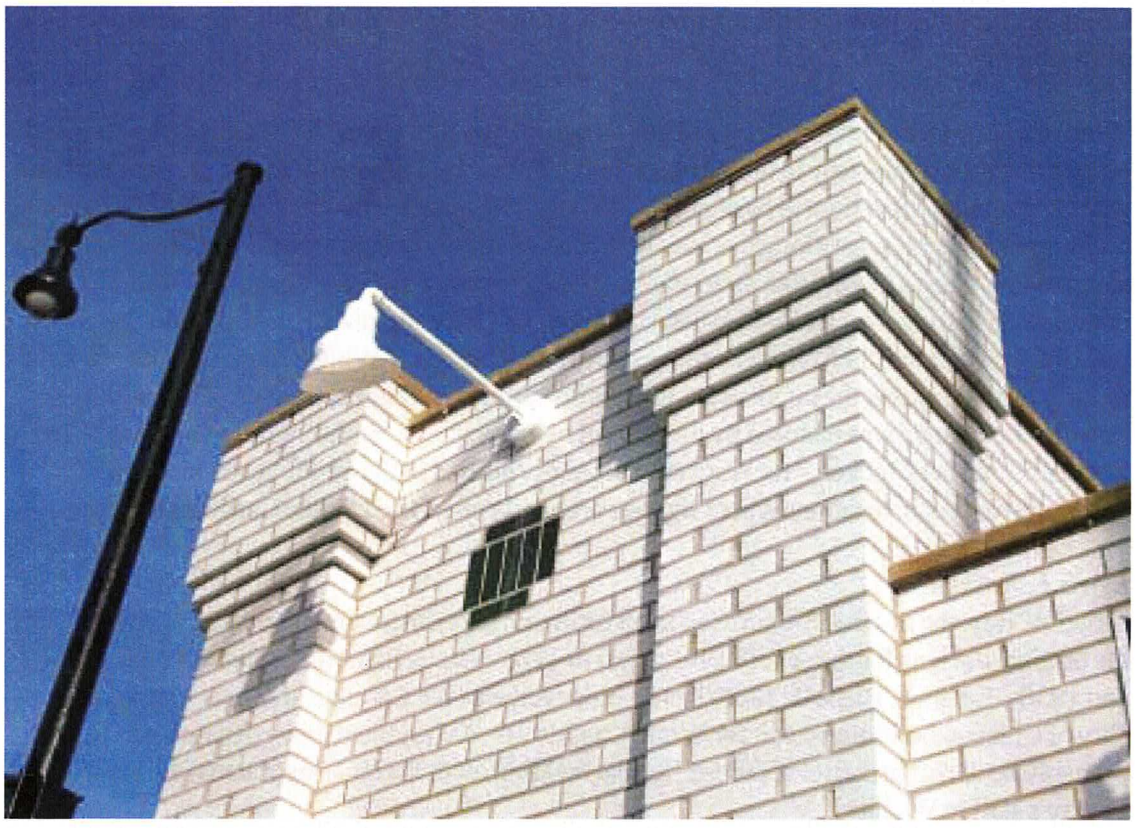
By 1930, the year that White Castle # 16 was built at the corner of E. Cermak Rd. and S. Wabash Ave. in Motor Row, White Castle hamburgers were well-established in Chicago. The earlier fifteen hamburger stands had been opened in a variety of South and West Side locations, including sites in the Englewood, South Chicago, Woodlawn, Auburn Gresham, Morgan Park, Roseland, Near West Side, and Brighton Park neighborhoods. Typically sited on prominent corners on major arterial streets, these locations provided ready access to working-class customers, either through proximity to centers of working-class jobs or through their location near streetcar "transfer points," where passengers changed lines while often doing quick shopping or grabbing a bite to eat.

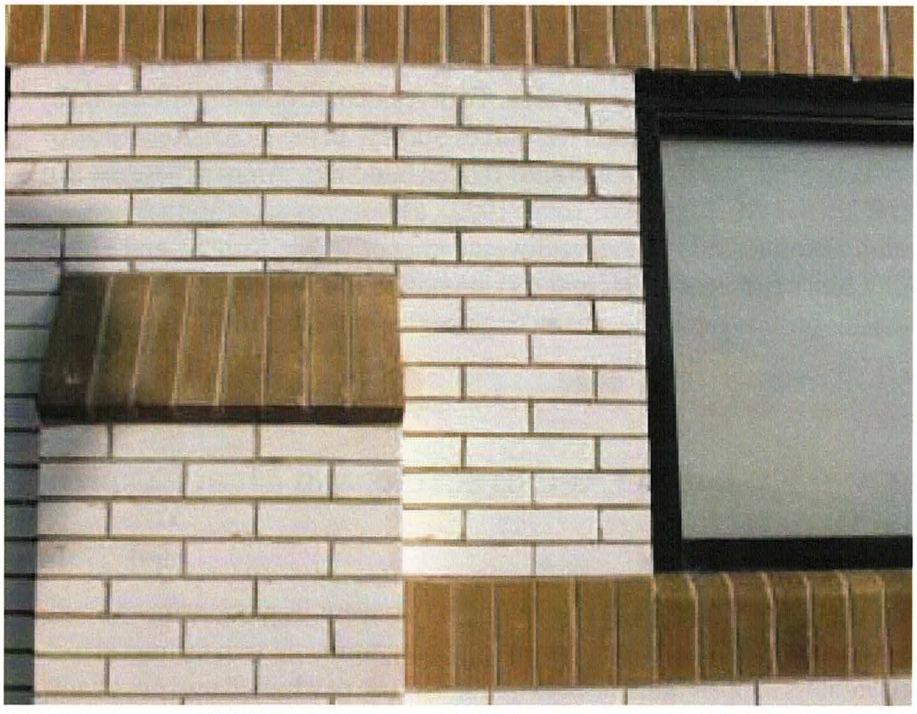
A building permit for White Castle # 16 was issued to the White Castle company on July 22, 1930. (Company policy numbered each "Castle" within a city in the order of their construction.) The architect was listed as "L. Russell," most likely Lewis E. Russell, a local Chicago architect. Based on published histories of White Castle, the actual designer of White Castle hamburger stands during this period was Lloyd W. Ray, the construction superintendent for White Castle, who designed all of the company's buildings in the late 1920s and 1930s. The contractor was the Crickson-Christenson Co.

According to White Castle corporate records, a porcelain-steel building a relatively new type of standardized building construction that White Castle had been experimenting with since 1928 was originally planned for the Cermak Rd. site; delays in getting porcelain-steel panels, however, led the company to decide to build the building using the white-glazed brick that had been used for "Castles" since 1925. White Castle records indicate that the building cost $4,500 to build. The building opened for business during the week of September 1, 1930.



White Castle #16 is a small commercial building built of white-glazed brick with green and beige brick trim. Its corner location, visually-prominent corner tower, and crisp form and detailing give the building a visual scale that belies its diminutive size. The building's design was a standard one used by White Castle in the late 1920s and early 30s.





Top: A close-up view of the building's corner tower, with its buttresses and green-brick accents. Bottom: The building's exterior walls are constructed of white-glazed brick with beige-brick detailing that accents windows and copings.

Company records show that the opening week's sales were $383.65, while the second week's sales rose markedly to $570.65

White Castle # 16 is a simply-designed building built of white glazed brick with dark green and beige brick trim. One-story in height and roughly 10 feet by 15 feet in plan, the original building was very small, with a floor area of approximately 150 square feet. (It now is part of a larger building that extends east along Cermak as well as slightly south on Wabash to the alley.) Large storefront windows pierce both street-facing walls. A corner "tower," abstracted wall buttresses, and roof crenellations give the building both a "modernized" medieval design and a sense of architectural "heft" surprising for such a small building. White-painted gooseneck light fixtures extending over the building's windows are replicas of original fixtures. The building's historic appearance was restored by the current owner in 2010. Small signs advertising "Chef Luciano Gourmet Chicken," the restaurant currently housed in the building, are placed just below the parapet in locations where signage originally advertised White Castle hamburgers.

Lewis E. Russell

Lloyd W. Ray, the in-house White Castle construction superintendent, is generally credited with the original designs for the several prototypes of White Castle hamburger stands in the 1920s and 1930s. Lewis E. Russell (1880-1948), however, was the Chicago architect listed on the City of Chicago building permit for White Castle # 16. As is typical today, Russell was probably the local "architect of record" for the building, with the building's actual design handled by Ray's staff in Wichita.

Russell's largest-known building was the Wedgewood Hotel (demolished), an 11-story "flatiron" building built in 1923 at the intersection of S. Minerva and S. Woodlawn Aves., just south of E. 63rd St., in the Woodlawn community area. Four residential buildings designed by Russell were identified in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. In the 1920s, Russell also designed a number of industrial, warehouse and auto-related buildings. Among these are a one-story service station at 2618 S. Michigan Ave. (built 1922); a two-story sales and service building for Community Motors, Inc., on the southwest corner of W. Madison St. and S. Lavergne Ave. (1928); and a two-story sales and service station at 4141-45 W. Grand Ave. (1930). Russell ended his professional career as an engineer for the Chicago City Council Traffic Committee.

White Castle and Fast-Food Architecture and Merchandizing Before World War II

White Castle's far-reaching innovations in the 1920s and 1930s were its pioneering and much-copied use, among restaurant chains, of distinctive-looking programmatic architecture; a visually-reinfored cleanliness in operations, such as through its use of white-glazed brick (and later porcelein-enamel-clad steel panel) exteriors and stainless steel interiors with open kitchens; a standardized menu and service featuring tasty "take-out" food that was high-quality while still inexpensive; and extensive newspaper advertising and outreach to middle-class families. Ingram

realized that a standard, yet visually distinctive, building appearance would allow White Castle to not only stand out from other restaurants, but from the typical city streetscape as a whole, providing the company with an unusual marketing tool. A standardized menu, even if limited, reassured customers that, no matter where they were, a White Castle promised consistent and affordable food and service without surprises. Newspaper advertising, rather than just customer word-of-mouth, became a standard means by which White Castle sought out customers. In addition, White Castle sought to make hamburgers a desirable meal option for middle-class families through marketing geared specifically to women planning menus for their families.

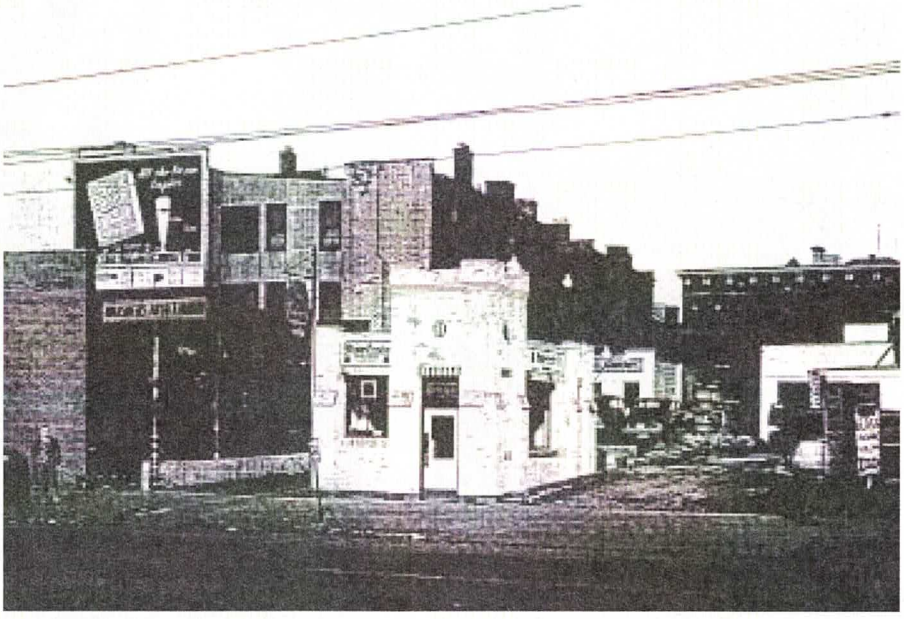
The popularization of automobiles played a role in the standaradization of White Castle architecture. As more people traveled by car, greater freedom and flexibility to travel and go where one wanted followed. Cities and suburbs expanded outward into areas served primarily by cars, along with the development of such important automobile roads as Route 66 and the Dixie Highway. Throughout the 1920s and 30s, entrepreneurs in general, and White Castle in particular, increasingly reaized that visually-distinctive architecture and signage could be lures for customers traveling by automobiles, getting their attention and encouraging them to stop.

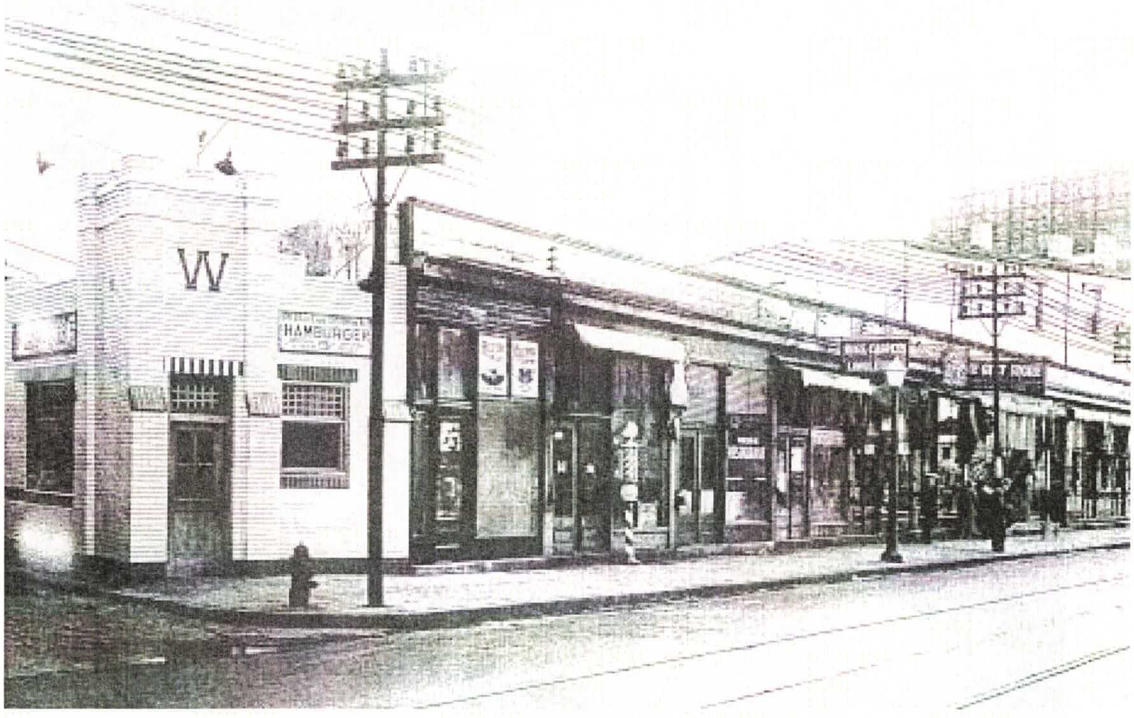
From the beginning of the company's existence, White Castle committed itself to visually-distinctive, standardized architectural designs for the company's buildings. The earliest White Castles in Wichita, Omaha, and Kansas City, built between 1921 and 1925, were constructed of white-painted, rusticated concrete block with medieval-looking, pressed-metal, rooftop turrets. All were built on an identical ten-by-fifteen-foot floor plan. In 1925, during the company's expansion into St. Louis, white-painted concrete-block construction was abandonned in favor of white glazed brick. Ingram believed that such brick, with a factory-applied finish that lasted without ongoing maintenance, better epitomized the company's joint themes of cleanliness and efficiency. In 1927, White Castle's engineering and construction superintendent, Lloyd W. Ray, noted that "the white glazed brick is the best money can buy , is artistically built . . . and is very sanitary." These "Castles," including White Castle # 16 in Chicago, were more visually coherent than the company's original building design, with a corner tower and simplified, medieval-inspired buttresses and crenellations integrated into the overall massing of the buildings, forming an abstract grid that framed large plate-glass windows.

As early as 1928, the company experimented with prefabricated porcelain-clad steel exteriors for its buildings. By the mid-1930s, glazed brick walls were given up entirely for porcelain-clad steel panel exteriors manufactured by the Porcelein Steel Buildings Co. with flatter walls, but more overtly-historicizing crennelated rooflines. This design became the company standard through the rest of the 1930s and World War II, and into the post-war era.

With their simplified yet exotic medieval-inspired details, White Castles are early significant examples of "programmatic" architecture. These are buildings that, through sometimes fantastical imagery or unusual visual cues, are designed to mimic products or services being sold inside, or are otherwise meant to visually exemplify values that the building's owner wants associated with its business, goods, or services. Most importantly, the building became the "sign" for the business within. The extreme type of programmatic architecture was later termed

Top: This White Castle hamburger stand, built in Kansas City in 1924, exemplifies the early concrete-block buildings with bold crenellated details that were constructed by the company as it first expanded from its original base of operations in Wichita. The set-back roof tower was built of sheet metal. Bottom: Starting in 1925, with the company's expansion into St. Louis, White Castle abandonned concrete block in favor of white-glazed brick and more abstracted, medieval-influenced details.





White Castle's buildings are early and significant examples of programmatic architecture, meant to serve as visual "billboards" for the company and to stand out from more traditional streetscapes. Top: White Castle # 5 in Columbus, Ohio, was located in a non-descript industrial area adjacent to downtown. Bottom: White Castle # 9 was a striking visual anchor for this stretch of one-story commercial buildings in a working-class neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio.

In the 1930s, White Castle switched from white-glazed brick to standardized white porcelain-enamel steel panels for building exteriors. Top: A porcelain-enamel steel-clad White Castle on Hempstead Turnpike in New York City's borough of Queens, photo from 1936. Bottom: A view of workers building castellated details for White Castles in the Porcelain Steel Buildings factory in Columbus, Ohio (date of photo unknown). In order to control costs and ensure quality, Ingram established Porcelain Steel Buildings as a wholly-owned subsidiery to manufacture the porcelein-enamel steel panels used in these later White Castles.

a "duck" by architects and planners Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi in works written in the 1960s about roadside architecture. They were referring to buildings such as the Big Duck (1931), a roadside retail poultry stand in Riverhead, New York, where ducks were sold out of a building shaped like a giant white duck. Another example is the Tail o' the Pup, a hot dog stand in Los Angeles, that was built in 1946 in the image of a giant hot dog.

White Castle architecture does not try to visually "mimic" the hamburgers sold inside. Instead, a White Castle is meant to serve as a visual "billboard" for customers through its visual familiarity, repeated throughout the country, and its use of a white, castellated building. Ingram chose the name "White Castle" for its associations with both permanance and cleanliness. White Castle's adoption of standardized building designs with crenellated details (symbolizing the staying power of medieval castles) and snow-white facades (representing purity of food and cleanliness of service) is an important early twentieth-century use of programmatic architecture on a national scale and influenced later companies.

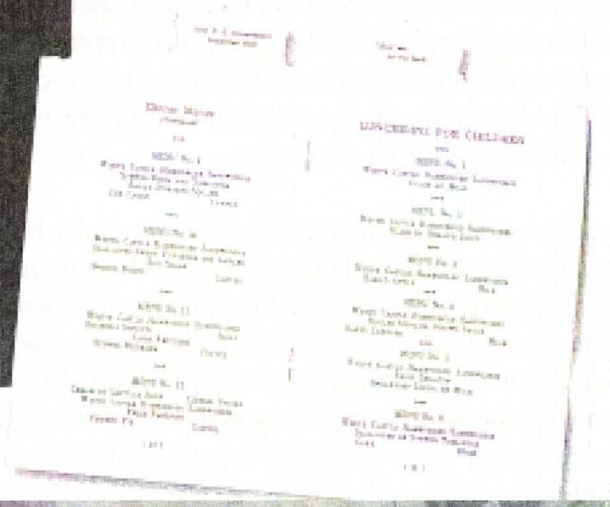
As Ingram refined the White Castle business model, he standardized even more. "Vertical integration" became the company standard. Borrowing the concept from the American steel industry, Ingram worked to gain functional control over as many aspects of White Castle operations as he could. For example, whenever it was possible, White Castle bought raw materials and made the final products that it used to its own specifications. Ingram built centralized warehouses to store supplies, both raw and finished, and even built bakeries to make hamburger buns. Buying in large quantiites, the company stockpiled its supplies until needed.

White Castle even went so far as manufacturing the porcelain-clad steel panels from which "Castles" themselves were constructed in the 1930s and later. The Porcelein Steel Buildings Co. was established by Ingram in the late 1920s as a separate, subsidiary company controlled by White Castle. By the late 1930s, it was manufacturing porcelein-clad steel structures not just for its parent company, but as a for-sale enterprise to other businesses, especially gas stations.

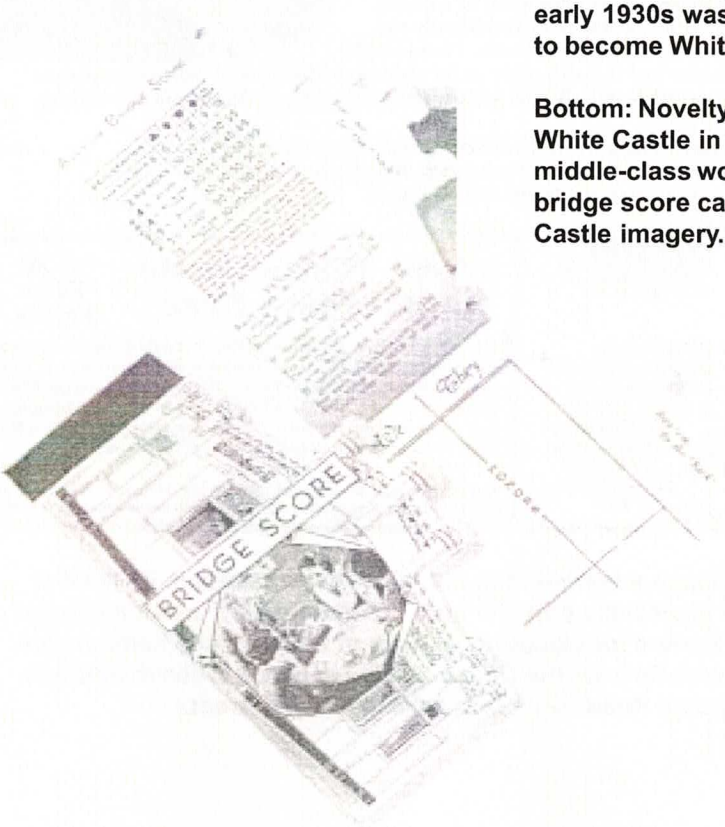
Soon after the establishment of Porcelain Steel Buildings, Ingram started the Paperlynen Co., which manufactured the paper hats and other products that White Castle used. Originally, grill cooks in White Castle had worn cloth hats. The cost and bother of keeping them washed to the company's expected standard of whiteness and cleanliness led Ingram to switch to paper. Subsequently, Paperlynen not only manufactured White Castle hats, but paper hats and other paper products for many other companies, restaurants, and businesses. Porcelein Steel Buildings and Paperlynen both supported the end goals of White Castle, yet were profitable in their own right.

From White Castle's earliest days, its corporate focus had been on both cleanliness and speed. The white appearance of "Castles," their stainless-steel and tile interiors, and food preparation and cooking in view of customers were all meant to allay fears of tainted and unwholesome hamburgers. In addition, Ingram's business model had called for a largely take-out clientale that could be assured of a quick "in-and-out." Anderson's original slogan, "Buy'em by the Sack," remained a key part of White Castle's marketing, and was encouraged by the tiny scale of the

Left: Ella Louise Agniel was hired by White Castle in 1932 to serve as the company's "hostess." Under her pseudonym "Julia Joyce," Agniel oversaw the company's marketing efforts to middle-class families, especially housewives.



Top right: A White Castle booklet given out by "Julia Joyce" to housewives touting varied ways that the company's hamburgers could be incorporated into family meals. Bottom: An advertising photo from the 1930s depicting a middle-class family enjoying White Castle hamburgers.



Top: This newspaper advertisement from the early 1930s was meant to encourage women to become White Castle customers.

Bottom: Novelty advertisements issued by White Castle in the 1930s that were aimed at middle-class women customers included bridge score cards decorated with White Castle imagery.

3 Hamburgers FREE!

At All White Castles

Buy 'em by the sack

**For Limited Time Only—
During Hours Specified Below!**

Take the attached coupon and only 10c to any White Castle listed in this advertisement during the hours specified below. You will receive a sack containing 5 full size White Castle Hamburgers of the usual high standard and quality. With the 10c you pay the regular price for 2 Hamburgers—you get 3 FREE, which we charge off as advertising to acquaint you with the superiority of White Castle Hamburgers. Incidentally you will see how clean and elegant is the interior of a White Castle. Then you will continue to be a White Castle customer and that will repay us for making you this special inducement to once visit one of our many White Castles, which you will find in 16 metropolitan centers throughout the country.

• U. S. Government Inspected *BEEF* delivered fresh twice daily is the ONLY meat used in White Castle Hamburgers. Buy 'em by the sack. Give your family and friends a treat.

CLIP COUPON NOW→

Chicago, Ill.

111th & State St.
63rd & Evans
414 E. 61st St.
814 E. 75th
7913 Cottage Grove
1644 E. 79th St.
2501 E. 79th St. (*at Essex*)
1813 W. Ogden (*at Van Buren & Wood*)
258 W. 63rd St.
672 W. 63rd (*at Union*)
93rd & Commercial
6740 S. Halsted
2209 S. Wabash (*at 22nd*)
71st & Western Ave.
Loomis at 79th St.
1835 W. Madison (*at Honore*)
12709 S. Western Ave.

White Castle SYSTEM
A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

Three White Castle Hamburgers *Free*

At All White Castles

Present this coupon with 10c at any White Castle listed at left during the hours specified below and receive a sack containing 5 White Castle Hamburgers. You pay the regular price for 2—you get 3 FREE provided you carry away all 5 Hamburgers in the bag. This coupon is good on sack orders only. The regular price of 5c each will be charged for each Hamburger served or eaten at counter.

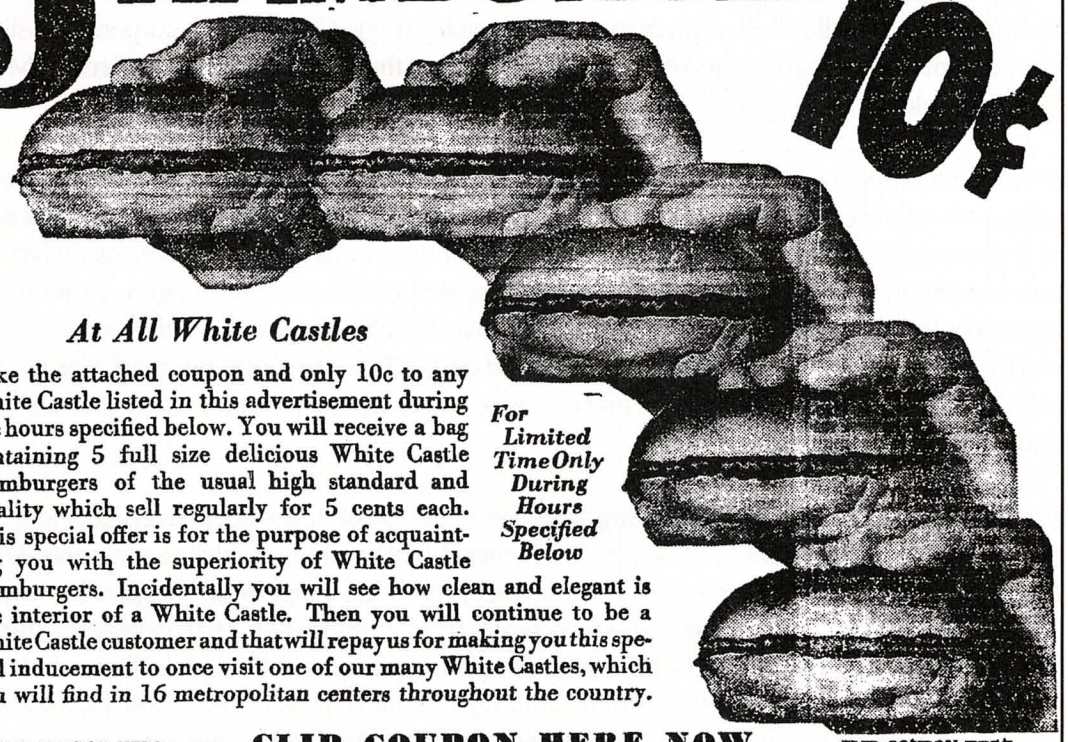
(T)

This coupon must be presented between 2 P.M. and Midnight any day before Midnight Sunday, July 30.—Only ONE coupon honored per person.

During the 1930s, White Castle began advertising in the major newspapers in its market cities. This and following page: Especially popular were "coupon days," when a clipped newspaper coupon could be redeemed for discounted sacks of White Castle hamburgers. (Both of these Chicago advertisements from the *Chicago Tribune* give a Wabash address for White Castle # 16 and list Cermak Road by its former name, 22nd Street.)

SPECIAL TRIAL OFFER

5 HAMBURGERS 10¢



At All White Castles

Take the attached coupon and only 10c to any White Castle listed in this advertisement during the hours specified below. You will receive a bag containing 5 full size delicious White Castle Hamburgers of the usual high standard and quality which sell regularly for 5 cents each. This special offer is for the purpose of acquainting you with the superiority of White Castle Hamburgers. Incidentally you will see how clean and elegant is the interior of a White Castle. Then you will continue to be a White Castle customer and that will repay us for making you this special inducement to once visit one of our many White Castles, which you will find in 16 metropolitan centers throughout the country.

For Limited Time Only During Hours Specified Below

CLIP COUPON HERE **CLIP COUPON HERE NOW** CLIP COUPON HERE

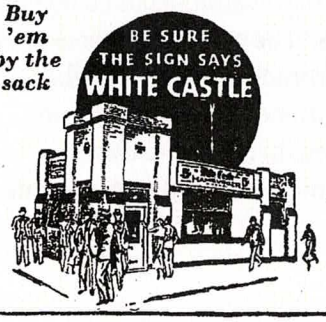
CLIP COUPON HERE NOW

5 Hamburgers for 10c at All White Castles

Between 2 P. M. and Midnight any day before Midnight Sunday July 1, 1934

ONLY *ONE* COUPON HONORED PER PERSON

Buy 'em by the sack



Any child or adult may present this coupon with 10c at any White Castle listed below during the hours specified above and receive a bag containing *5 regular* White Castle Hamburgers. This coupon is good for sack orders only. The regular price of 5 cents each will be charged for each Hamburger served or eaten at the counter.

If you wish more than the 5 Hamburgers provided for in this coupon, the White Castle Attendant will be glad to *sell you as many more Hamburgers as you desire,* at the regular price of 5 cents each.

Remember U. S. Government Inspected BEEF delivered fresh daily, is the ONLY meat used in White Castle Hamburgers. Buy 'em by the Sack.

111th & State St.
63rd & Evans
814 E. 75th
6740 S. Halsted
2209 S. Wabash *(at 22nd)*
71st & Western Ave.
Kedzie & Archer

Chicago, Ill.

7913 Cottage Grove
1644 E. 79th St.
2501 E. 79th St. *(at Essex)*
1813 W. Ogden *(at Van Buren & Wood)*

Loomis at 79th St.
1835 W. Madison *(at Honore)*
12709 S. Western Ave.
93rd & Commercial
672 W. 63rd St.
258 W. 63rd St.

White Castle SYSTEM (T)
A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

CLIP COUPON HERE NOW

hamburger stands, which did not encourage lingering. These efforts were meant to allay the fears of the working-class customers that made up the early consumer base for White Castle hamburgers.

As the company expanded, however, Ingram looked for new ways to expand its customer base. In the early 1930s, as the Depression began to cut into the spending power of working-class customers, White Castle began to promote hamburgers to middle-class families. In 1932, Ingram hired Ella Louise Agniel, a former corporate and legal secretary, as the company's new corporate hostess. Given the pseudonym of "Julia Joyce," she marketed White Castle hamburgers to middle-class women in cities served by White Castle. Such corporate hostesses were common in the early years of the twentieth century, the most famous being General Mills' "Betty Crocker."

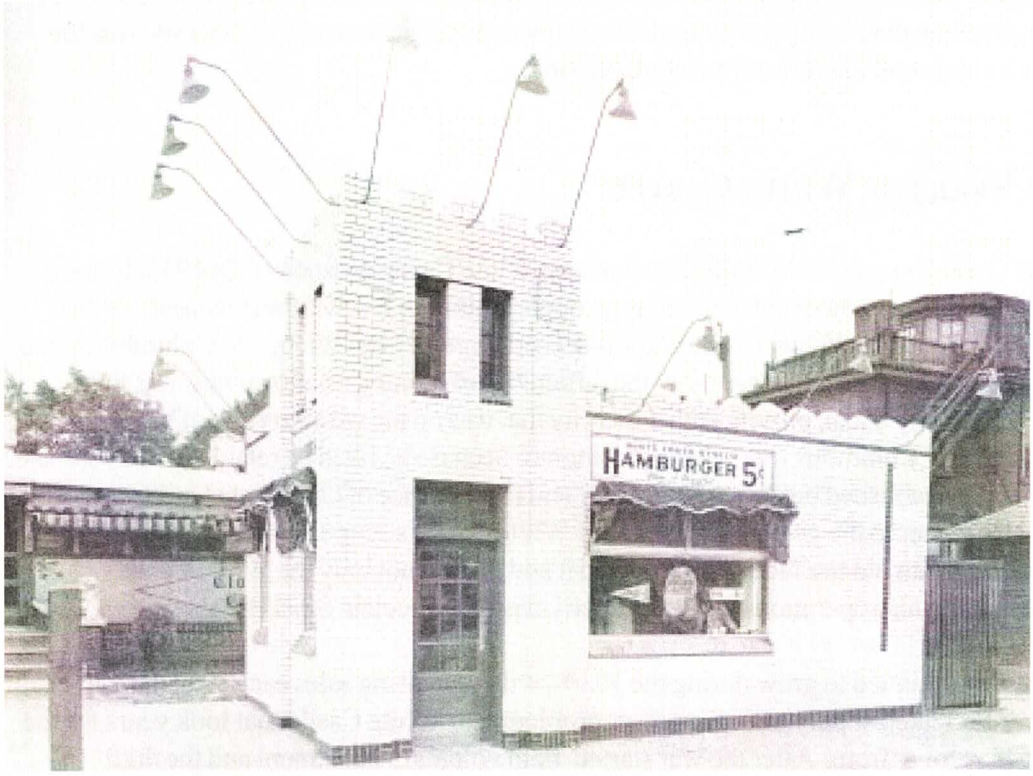
Joyce traveled extensively, bringing sacks of White Castle hamburgers to women's clubs and other such organizations whenever she could. She stressed both the nutritional value and ease of incorporating hamburgers into family menus, distributing booklets with sample menus showing how to combine White Castle hamburgers with vegetables and other side dishes. In addition, Joyce handled the company's high-profile charity work, delivering hamburgers to orphanages and to community events in White Castle-served cities. The purpose of her work was to convince potential customers that White Castle was both a good place for families to eat and a good corporate neighbor.

White Castle is also credited with being a pioneer in the use of newspaper advertising and promotional sales in support of restaurants in general, and hamburger sales in particular. On June 3, 1933, Ingram first ran a special newspaper promotion in major newspapers in White Castle-served cities. It advertised a coupon worth five hamburgers for two cents each, for a total of a dime, redeemable on the following day starting at 2 pm. Although he knew that the company would lose money on the promotion, Ingram believed that the favorable publicity it brought, along with new customers, would make up the shortfall in the long run.

The response was astonishing. White Castle operators reported that customers lined up hours ahead of the promotion start time, with lines stretching for blocks. The company later estimated that millions of newspaper coupons were redeemed during this promotion, which ran for a week. Sales were so intense that some Castles ran out of food after only an hour. Many customers commented that the coupons were the lure that got them to try White Castle hamburgers for the first time. Such newspaper promotions became a standard tool in White Castle marketing through the rest of the 1930s.

Early Competitors to White Castle

By the 1930s, White Castle's great success had helped position hamburgers as the new "American" sandwich, and companies imitating White Castle sprang up throughout the country. Although most remained local concerns and relatively short-lived, these other hamburger chains exemplify the influence that White Castle had on American eating habits. Many used names that were similar to White Castle, including White Tower, White Hut, White Fortress and white Palace. Other variations focused on the notion of "castle," including Red Castle, Blue Castle



White Castle's success in selling hamburgers encourged many imitators, both large and small, during the 1920s and 1930s. One of the most blatant was White Tower, founded in Milwaukee in 1925. White Tower imitated all aspects of White Castle's operations, including look-alike buildings designed with castellated features and built from white brick. Top: A White Castle located on Broadway in New York City, built in 1930. Bottom: A White Tower built in Philadelphia, also in 1930.

and Green Castle. It is estimated that more than 100 other hamburger chains boasted names similar in some manner to White Castle by the 1930s.

Some hamburger chains copied themselves after the White Castle business model, but operated in a different part of the country and did not compete directly. Krystal's, headquartered in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and founded in 1929, was one of the largest and most important of these non-competitve imitators, setting up hamburger stands in southern cities where White Castle had no presence. These companies did not threaten Ingram, and he left them alone.

The White Tower chain, on the other hand, operated in direct competition with White Castle in a number of cities. Started in 1925 in Milwaukee, White Tower was conceived by its owners as a direct copy of White Castle, with a former White Castle operator providing detailed specifications on all aspects of White Castle operations, including dimensions and construction details of White Castle buildings to the cooking techniques of grilling hamburgers. The resulting chain had a name, buildings and food that were confusingly similar to that of White Castle.

White Tower soon moved into cities where White Castle already had a presence. Ingram, alarmed by the copy-cat competition, responded with a lawsuit against White Tower in federal court. A five-year legal fight brought a decision in favor of White Castle. Ingram was generous to his competitor, requiring as the most significant change in White Tower's practices that the rival company remodel its buildings to make them less castle-like and similar to those of White Castle. It is telling that, in Ingram's mind, the distinctive architecture of White Castle was the company's chief asset to protect from competition.

Later Years of White Castle

While the Great Depression hurt most businesses, White Castle prospered. In 1933, Ingram bought out Anderson, who wanted to focus on opportunities in the aviation business. At that time, Ingram moved the White Castle corporate headquarters from Wichita to Columbus, Ohio. Ingram had been frustrated for years with the difficulties of running a national business from Wichita, a relatively small, provincial Kansas city that was on the western edge of White Castle's territory. Columbus was selected by Ingram because he liked its relatively mild climate, its larger, well-established business community and the presence of Ohio State University. The city was also closer to the geographic center of White Castle's scope of operations. The company bought an old tire factory, remodeled it and moved not only the White Castle headquarters, but also operations for both Paperlynen and Porcelain Steel Buildings.

White Castle continued to grow during the 1930s, with increasing sales each year. However, World War II created supply and manpower problems for White Castle that took years for the company to recover from. After the war started, both voluntary enlistment and the draft diminished the pool of possible employees. The company's standards of good family background and personal decorum were loosened, with the consequence that employee troubles increased. Although Ingram continued to prefer male employees, he soon had no choice but to hire female counter attendants. Despite his apparent initial misgivings, women workers turned out to be excellent workers for the company.

In addition, commodity shortages and rationing, including coffee, sugar, and ground beef, created additional problems. A variety of substitute foodstuffs, including grain-based coffee substitutes such as Postum, and hamburger substitutes such as fish sandwiches and baked beans, were offered. However, a decline in the fortunes of the company still occurred. By the end of the war, White Castle had gone from 130 hamburger stands in 1941 to only 87 in 1945.

It was during this time, on October 14, 1944, that White Castle closed White Castle # 16 on Cermak Rd. in Chicago. The building was sold a month later, in October 1944, to new local owners, Nora Truitt and Madonna E. Fitzgerald, for $6,500. Truitt and Fitzgerald continued to use the building as a small-scale food stand.

During the next 20 years, White Castle remained a relatively small fast-food chain; newer hamburger chains such as McDonald's in the 1950s and Burger King in the 1960s began to dominate post-World War II America and expand nationwide, building on White Castle's earlier innovations. It was only after 1966, when Edgar W. Ingram, Jr., the founder's son, succeeded his father as president of the company, that White Castle began to grow again. Having remained largely an inner-city hamburger chain through the 1950s and early 1960s, White Castle under Ingram, Jr., began to expand into suburban America. Other changes followed; for example, curb-side service, begun in 1936, would be replaced by the drive-thru that had become widely adopted by the modern fast-food restaurant industry.

In 1979, Ingram, Jr. turned over control of the company to his son, Edgar W. "Bill" Ingram III. The company expanded greatly in the 1980s and 1990s, tripling the number of White Castles by the end of the century. Today, there are over 400 White Castle restaurants in the United States, all owned by the company. While updated, many of the signature hallmarks of the original company remain as part of the chain today, particularly the white castellated buildings. White Castle remains a privately-held company under the control of the Ingram family.

White Castle #16

White Castle #16 was bought in 1982 by Chef Luciano, who has run a popular take-out chicken stand and restaurant from the building in the years since. In 2010, the building was restored to its original White Castle appearance, including signage and gooseneck light fixtures similar to those originally used by White Castle. The distinctive brick exterior was repaired, including the replacement of missing or damaged brick and features lost in previous remodelings.

The documentation and preservation of twentieth-century roadside architecture, including take-out and fast-food restaurant buildings and food stands, remains in its infancy. Most early White Castles, due to their small scale and prominent, desirable corner locations within cities, have been lost to redevelopment or unsympathetic remodelings. Only one White Castle, White Castle #8 in Minneapolis, has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built from a prototype design, using porcelain-enamel steel panels, in 1936, six years after Chicago's White Castle #16, and is no longer on its original site. In Indianapolis, White Castle #3, a white-glazed brick building dating from 1927, has been proposed for listing on both the National Register and the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures.

Examples of other surviving early and mid-century fast-food restaurant chain buildings are scattered across the country. A single-arch McDonald's sign in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, built in 1962, was listed on the National Register in 2006 after it was moved from its original location. Buildings that have been preserved, often by their original companies, include the first Wendy's hamburger restaurant in downtown Columbus, Ohio; the Col. Sanders Café in Corbin, Kentucky, originally owned by the Kentucky Fried Chicken founder; and the first Pizza Hut, which was moved and preserved for study at Wichita State University, Kansas. The oldest-surviving McDonald's, built in 1953 by the McDonald brothers and located in Downey, California, remains in business. McDonald's #1, built in 1955 by Ray Kroc as part of his national expansion of the company, stands today in Des Plaines, Illinois, as a museum.

Criteria for Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art or other object within the City of Chicago if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for designation," as well as possesses sufficient historic design integrity to convey its significance.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that White Castle # 16 be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Value as an Example of City, State or National Heritage

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

- White Castle # 16 exemplifies the historic importance of White Castle System of Eating Houses, Inc., as a pioneering, national restaurant chain in the history of the United States. White Castle was founded in Wichita, Kansas, in 1921, and its popular hamburger stands soon spread to over a dozen cities, including Chicago by 1930. The company is considered the "father" of the many fast-food chains that have transformed American eating habits and streetscapes in the twentieth century.

- White Castle was the first restaurant chain to popularize hamburgers. Formerly a disreputable "carnival" food in the early 20th century, hamburgers became the defacto "American" sandwich in the 1920s (and remains so today), largely due to White Castle.

- White Castle is significant for its pioneering and much-copied use, among restaurant chains, of distinctive-looking programmatic architecture; a visually-reinfored cleanliness in operations, such as through its use of white-glazed brick (and later porcelein-enamel-clad steel panel) exteriors and stainless steel interiors with open kitchens; a standardized menu and service featuring tasty "take-out" food that was high-quality while still inexpensive; and extensive newspaper advertising and outreach to middle-class families. These innovations were very influential at the time and remain in wide use today.

Criterion 4: Exemplary Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.

- White Castle # 16 is the earliest and best-surviving fast-food building in Chicago built by a chain restaurant, in this case the pioneering and much-copied national fast-food company.

- The building is a visually-distinctive, white glazed-brick building with unusual medieval-inspired imagery in its massing and details, including a corner tower, abstracted buttresses, and crenellations, inspired by Chicago's Water Tower.

- The building is an early important example of early twentieth-century "programmatic" architecture—visually-distinctive buildings that served as "bricks-and-mortar" advertising for companies, often through visual cues that tied into a company's values or image, or, in some instances, even "mimicked" the actual products sold from the buildings. White Castle is an early and important national chain that used architecture as a "sign" and a visual advertisement for its products, in this instance, hamburgers. Its use of white, castellated buildings was a visual reinforcement of the name, "White Castle," which advertised both permanence and cleanliness, two virtues that set White Castle apart from its competitors in the company's early years.

Criterion 7: Unique or Distinctive Visual Feature

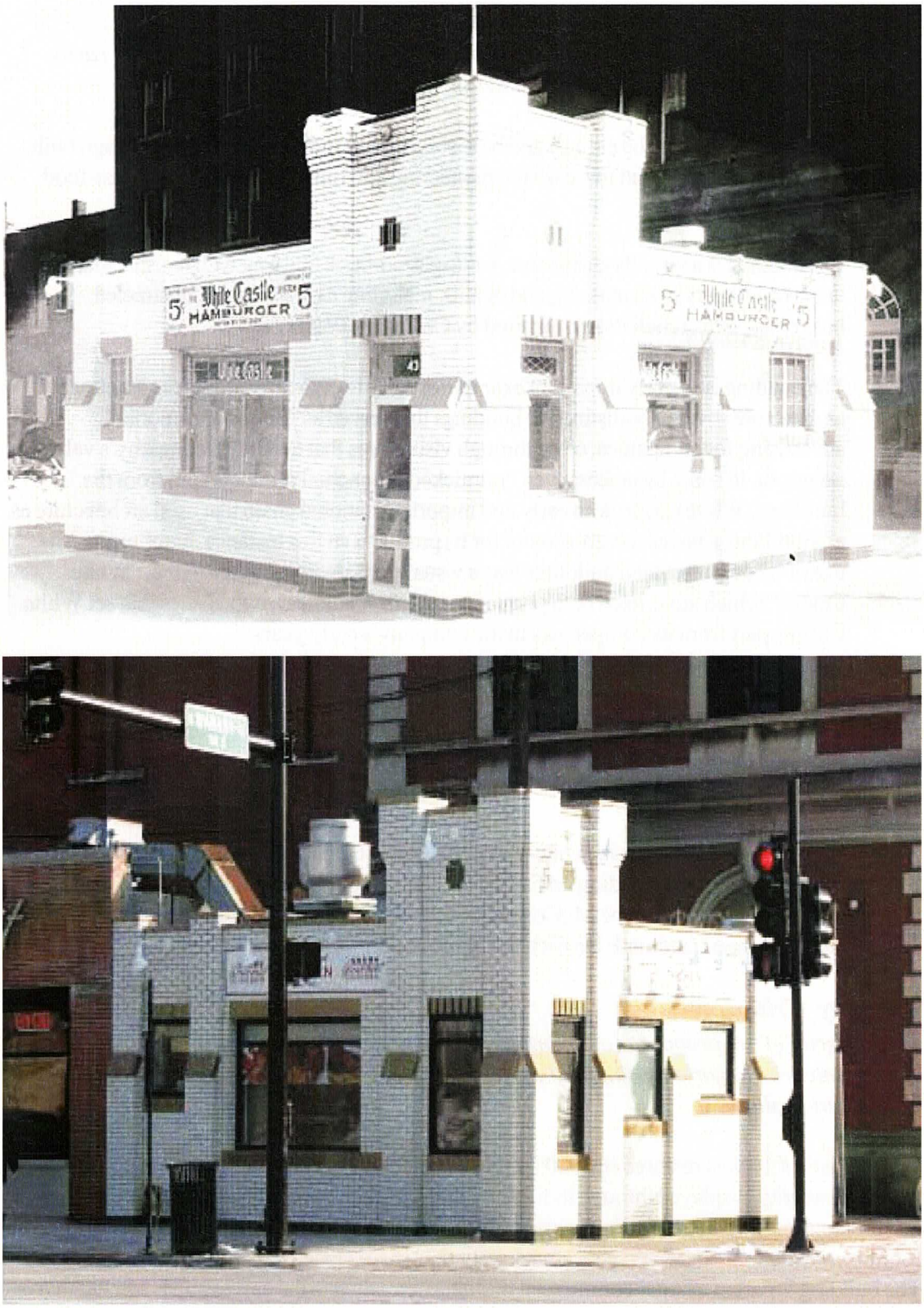
Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or City of Chicago.

- White Castle # 16, with its white-glazed brick and crenellated exterior, is a familiar, visually-distinctive building on E. Cermak Rd., a major thoroughfare running across the Near South Side from the McCormick Place convention center, through the Motor Row Chicago Landmark District, to Chinatown.

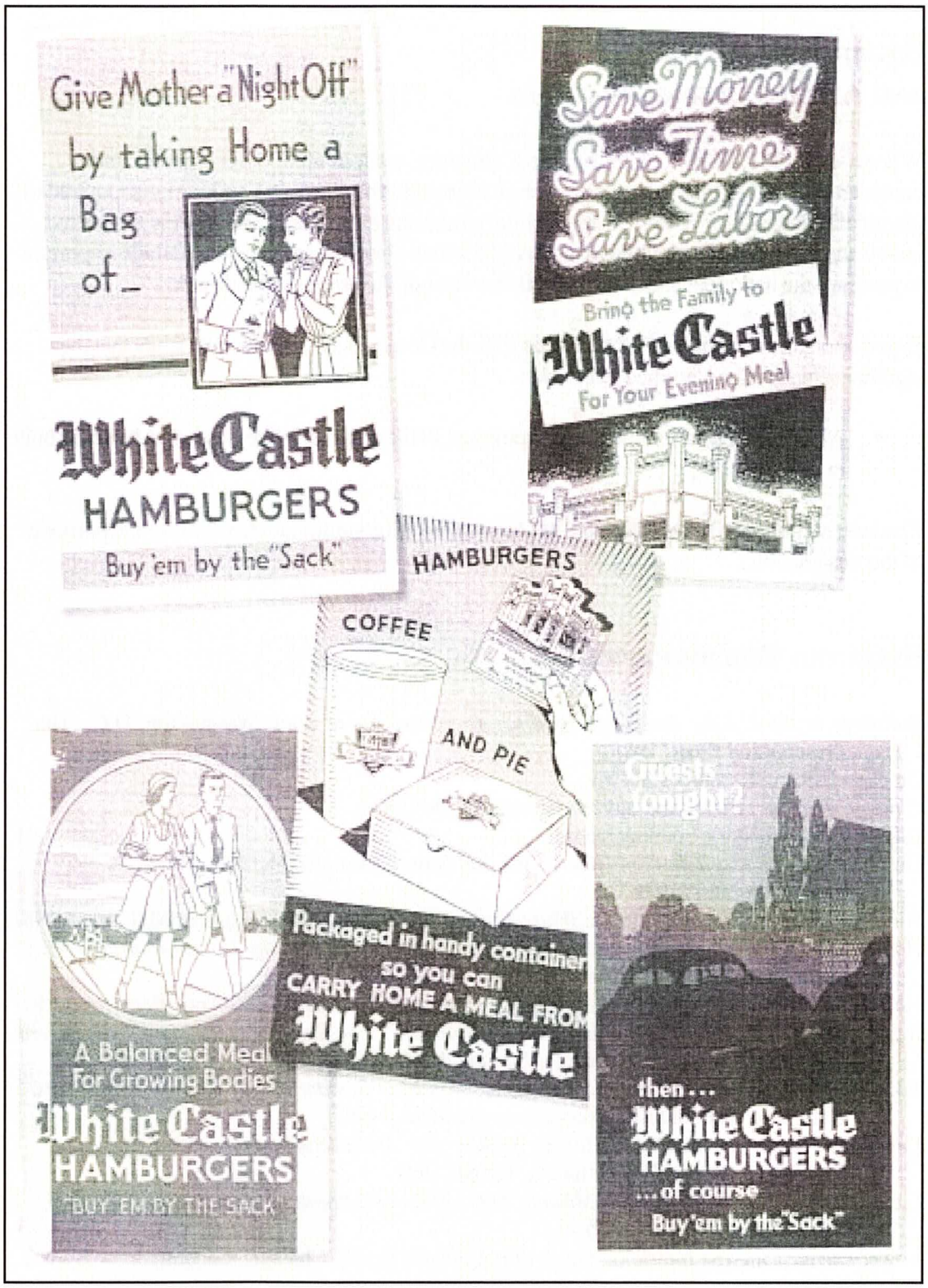
Integrity Criterion

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architecture or aesthetic value.

White Castle # 16 was restored in 2010 by the current owner. The building retains excellent physical integrity, displayed through its historic location, overall design, historic materials, details and ornamentation. The restoration has replaced missing exterior features, including missing rooftop crenellation. Signs and goose-neck light fixtures are located in their historic locations. The building is part of a larger commercial building extending to the east towards Michigan Ave., although this addition reads as a separate adjacent building and does not detract from the historic building's historic appearance or ability to convey its exceptional historical and architectural value.



White Castle # 16 was restored in 2010 by its current owner. Top: A view of the building soon after its opening in 1930. Bottom: The building as it looks in 2011.



Several White Castle advertisements (dates unknown).

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art or other object is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based upon its evaluation of White Castle #16, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as follows:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the original White Castle #16 building built in 1930.

The later additions to the building are not considered to be significant features for the purposes of this designation.

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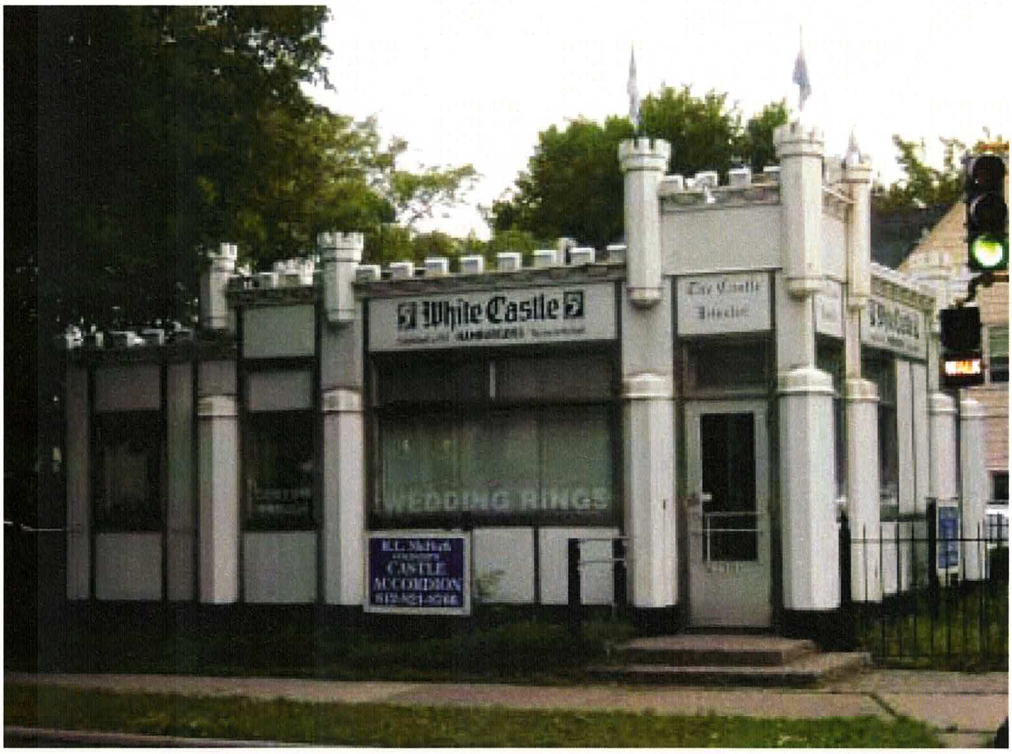
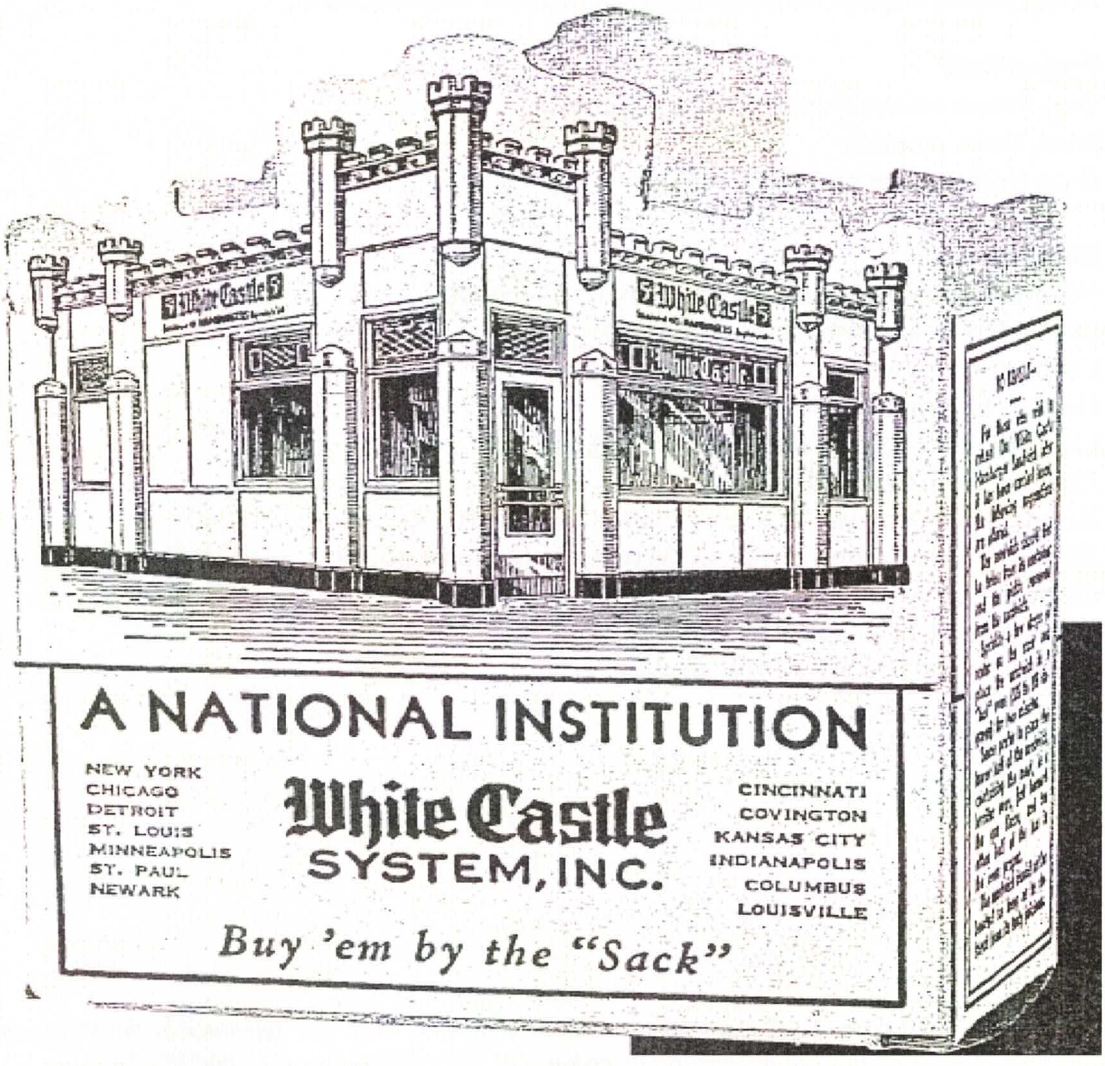


Top: White Castle # 8, located in Minneapolis, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1936 from a prototype design using porcelain-enamel steel panels.

Bottom: A night view of White Castle #16 in Chicago (photo from 2011).

Two views of other White Castles built in Chicago. Top: White Castle # 9, Chicago (unidentified location, photo circa 1937). Bottom: Interior of White Castle # 10, Chicago (unidentified location, photo taken circa 1930).



A White Castle take-out box from the 1930s.

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Liebs: pp. 4 (bottom), 6 (top left), 22 (top), 29 (top).
Langdon: pp. 6 (top right, middle, bottom), 11.
Hogan, *Sell 'em by the Sack*: pp. 10, 13, 22 (bottom), 24 (bottom), 25 (top).
Hogan, "White Castle:" pp. 20, 21,24 (top), 25 (bottom), 35, 39.
Chicago Tribune: pp. 26, 27.
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Andy Pierce: p. 37 (bottom).

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual building, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division, 33 North LaSalle Street, Room 1600, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; (312-744-2958) TTY; (312-744-9140) fax, web site: www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the final landmark designation ordinance as approved by City Council should be regarded as final.